

## More transparency and planning security in the multi-project business - Blue Ant in use at Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH

Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH (German automobile trust) or DAT is an international company in the automotive industry, which collects and processes comprehensive vehicle data and makes it widely available to the industry inexpensively using the SilverDAT® system. DAT has been using the multi-project management software Blue Ant, for increased transparency and planning security in its project business, since 2014.



## Case Study

With Blue Ant, Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH (DAT) implemented a comprehensive project management solution. This was carried out in stages, first in the "Management Applications" section. This was deliberately chosen because this department not only frequently works with external IT solutions and service providers, but because, among other things, a key DAT product called "SilverDAT myclaimPRO" is being developed there. This is a communication platform for clients such as car manufacturers, insurance companies, auto trade groups, garages etc. This software helps carry out business transactions relating to, for example, vehicle damage or used vehicle management. The software architecture is also the basis for the new version of the DAT-core product, "SilverDAT 3".

Project management for Blue Ant reported directly to the DAT Product Manager, Dr.

Thilo Wagner, from the beginning. During the whole pilot phase, the department consisted of an international team of 15 people who were responsible for managing several external service providers. So, various project groups and project types had to be coordinated.



DAT Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH, Ostfeldern, Baden-Württemberg

This required extensive project management software. DAT wanted a solution which is able to successfully manage complex internal and external projects, agile projects and service projects. Transparency, efficient capacity planning and a robust reporting to management in planning new projects were also requirements in the specification sheet. The board also initiated the system project and promoted its development from the beginning.

### A uniform solution was necessary

Before the introduction of Blue Ant, projects in DAT were managed with various systems. Individual areas of the company used their own solutions - either in the form of free-ware or fee-based standard software. In a software company the size of DAT, such a procedure is not uncommon. Ultimately, additional new tasks, the more international orientation and the company's restructuring in 2013, made a unified solution necessary.

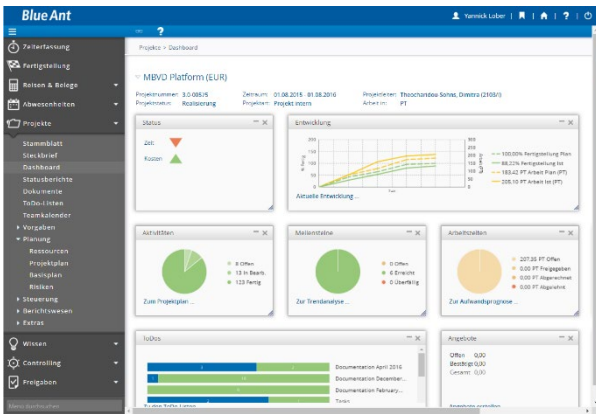
In the assessment phase, project management tested and evaluated the different providers. In the summer of 2013, the six-month pilot phase began in the "Management Applications" unit for selected individual projects. In early 2014, DAT decided to use Blue Ant and introduced the software into the "Management Applications" unit first.

### The introduction of Blue Ant and the establishment of the Project Management Office

To start with, project management picked out three areas from the product line portfolio of DAT: vehicle assessment, repair cost calculation and central data. The managers are still working very closely together to develop the new "SilverDAT 3" system. Project management assigned two managers from each of these product lines and established a PMO team (Project Management Office). It consisted of both technical and IT staff, with "technical" referring to the particular orientation of the product line.

Together with project management, processes and cycles were simulated and scenarios played out. They were modeled in workshops with proventis and finally, Blue Ant was introduced in each product line. This was followed by a number of "Train the Trainer" courses and training courses for project managers and other staff.

So far, DAT's experience of Blue Ant in multi-project work has been very good, as they can now plan employee capacity very accurately and transparently across product lines. Typical application scenarios that are supported by Blue Ant include the planning of activities and resources for single and multi-dimensional projects. It also helps in terms of transparency to customers in billing for services.



Blue Ant in use at the DAT

Using the system, it is possible in the quoting of new projects, to access experience from previous projects. How a possible framework for future costs in similar projects may look quickly becomes apparent from the Blue Ant reporting.

### Two projects serve as good examples of the progress Blue Ant has brought:

- The first is the development of the aforementioned product, "SilverDAT 3". Here, internal and external capacity of four different product lines and activities of the "General Administration" division are aggregated and managed within the framework of the project. The ToDos from the product lines and sales are the core building blocks of the new product, SilverDAT 3, that DAT will offer its 18,000 plus customers in the future as a successor to SilverDAT II. The time recording for the individual work packages and agile distribution of employees on the work packages is controlled by the tool.
- The second example concerns the numerous customer projects created through Blue Ant, based on the SilverDAT, myclaimPRO system. These are custom-configured and enhanced product versions of the system for insurance companies, vehicle manufacturers and large retail groups, with which, among

other things, bodywork, paint or glass damage can be handled and fully digitally processed.

### Accurate resource planning

In general, DAT expected a further improvement in its multi-project management with Blue Ant, i.e. precise planning of resources in their customer projects, as employees work on several customer-specific product variants in parallel to their daily work. The overall planning of customer projects from quotation to invoicing is further optimized by Blue Ant.

Problems with the input of data, in particular working hours, which are often associated with the introduction of project management software, were successfully solved by DAT. Since time recording at DAT is already subject to an operating agreement, DAT and its works council found an amicable solution based on two principles. First, sensitizing staff to the fact that recording working hours is not intended for the purpose of controlling, but rather to measure experience. These values enable DAT to show transparency towards its clients and to learn from similar projects. Second is common sense: all tasks are categorized by clarifying processes internally in advance, and employees and the system are geared to this, and not the other way around.

### Data networking of different systems

The data connectivity between different systems ultimately provided various challenges for DAT. A bigger challenge was the interface for connecting holiday planning for DAT employees. For a while, data had to be entered twice. The company also had to harmonize its ticket system and time re-

ording for non-projects, planning in release cycles and the recording of other To-Dos on a system without media breaks.

Ultimately, you could see the introduction of Blue Ant at DAT as an investment in professional project management. "As we have significantly increased the transparency and predictability of our projects, it is possible to guarantee deadlines to customers much more precisely," explains Dr. Thilo Wagner, CEO DAT products. "This is due to the fact that we can see at a very early stage when the project is expected to be finished. This gives us a better foresight and perspective." Other advantages for Dr. Wagner are that the feasibility of other projects is clearer, reporting has been optimized and relevant information is available more quickly.

DAT recommends that companies of similar size deal intensively with their own internal processes before the introduction of a multi-project management system: "These processes must be recorded and then accompanied by a system. Then multi-project management can succeed. The company must predefine and exemplify the processes the tool is designed to support," says Dr. Wagner.

## Contact

Jana Meyer  
Assistant to the Management  
Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH  
[www.dat.de](http://www.dat.de)  
[Jana.Meyer@dat.de](mailto:Jana.Meyer@dat.de)